GRAVITY FIELD MODELLING FROM KINEMATIC POSITIONS USING THE GENERALIZED LEAST SQUARES

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General characteristics of the method used

- Satellite acceleration approach based on Newton second law used as vector equation
- No a priori gravity model needed, Stokes parameters (SP) obtained directly through linear regression
- Three independent solutions [along-track (A-T), cross-track (C-T), radial (RAD)] can be optimally combined using normal matrices → deficiencies of along-track solution are mitigated
- Problems of noise amplification and autocorrelation are avoided using the generalized least squares method
- Stokes parameters were successfully obtained from real-world orbits of GRACE (years) and GOCE (months)

Method of inversion

(1) GPS-based accelerations

- Kinematic positions **r** → second-derivative digital filter F
  → GPS-based (observed) accelerations $d^2\mathbf{r}/dt^2 \approx \mathbf{a}_{GPS}(\mathbf{r}) \equiv F * r$

(2) Newton second law

- $\mathbf{a}_{GPS} \equiv d^2\mathbf{r}/dt^2 = \mathbf{a}_{geop} + \mathbf{a}_{LS} + \mathbf{a}_{TID} + \mathbf{a}_{NG}$
  where the accelerations are due to:

$\mathbf{a}_{geop}(\mathbf{r}) \equiv \sum SP \times \nabla SSH(r,\theta,\varphi)$ geopotential in sph. harmonics SSH

$\mathbf{a}_{LS}$ … lunisolar effects

$\mathbf{a}_{TID}$ … solid Earth and ocean tides

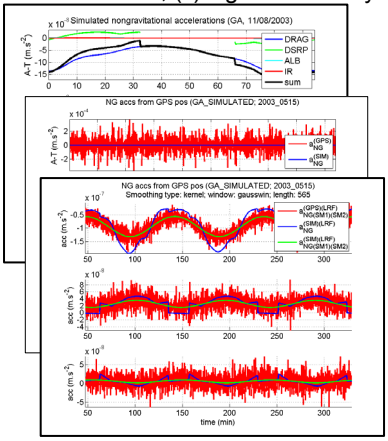
$\mathbf{a}_{NG}$ … acc. of nongravitational origin (drag, radiation pressures)

(3) Stokes parameters (SP)

- Obtained by means of linear regression from linear system:
  $\sum SP \times \nabla SSH(r,\theta,\varphi) = \mathbf{a}_{GPS} - (\mathbf{a}_{LS} + \mathbf{a}_{TID} + \mathbf{a}_{NG})$

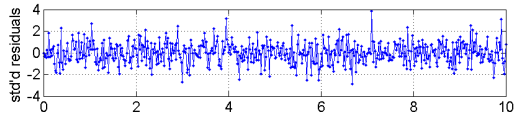
(4) Problem of amplified noise

- Second derivative filter F in (1) amplifies the noise in the GPS positions, especially high-frequency noise
- Figs: example for nongravitational forces, the "true" signal $\mathbf{a}_{NG}^{(SIM)}$ is buried in noise
- Moreover, through the action of filter **F**, the noise becomes also autocorrelated (more about it in (5))
- Smoothing is a possible way out, but it creates: (i) further autocorrelation of residuals; (ii) signal is heavily smoothed too

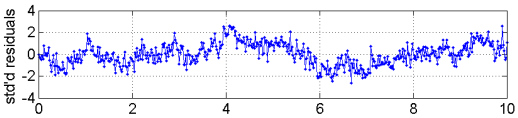


(5) Problem of autocorrelated noise

- Ordinary least squares (OLS) provide correct uncertainty estimates for the fitted parameters (the usual "3-σ rule"), if the errors are independent and normally distributed
- If random errors are positively correlated (so called "problem of autocorrelated errors" in OLS), then:
  - uncertainty (error bar) of fitted parameters is underestimated
  - one gets overly optimistic accuracy estimates
- In (3) filter F generates a correlation structure of the random noise in a_{GPS}
- Example: White noise



- Example: Autocorrelated random noise



(6) Generalized least squares (GLS)

- If errors in an OLS problem are correlated → the covariance matrix is not diagonal, $C \neq \sigma^2 \boldsymbol{I}$
- Then the GLS defines linear transformation W such that the new covariance matrix is diagonal. The transformation matrix $W=T^{-1}$, where C=TT' (T is sometimes called the "square root" of C)
- In the transformed variables, the usual OLS is used to find the regression parameters with correct estimates of their uncertainties
- GLS is a linear transformation of Eq. (3) to decorrelate the covariance matrix of observations: this is sometimes already "contained" in the formulation of the Gauss-Markov theorem, which states that the OLS estimator is BLUE estimator

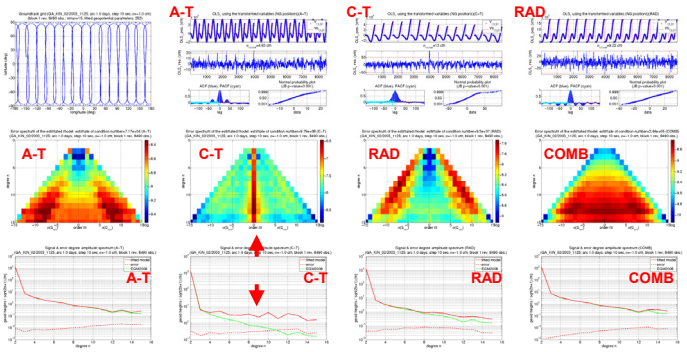
(7) Use of GLS to remove autocorrelation and HF noise

- In fact, the non-diagonal covariance matrix was generated by action of the second derivative filter F: $C=\sigma^2 FF'$, where σ^2 is the variance of the white noise in the GPS positions → finding the GLS transformation matrix is straightforward: $W=F^{-1}$
- Since filter F is FIR filter (finite impulse response), the discrete convolution with it may be formulated using a matrix; we compute W as the inverse of the corresponding filter matrix
- $W=F^{-1}$ is an inverse to the second derivative filter → application of transformation W is thus a sort of "double integral"
- Effectively, we got back into the positions, but now with the known part of the signal removed
- After applying the GLS transformation matrix W to (3):
  - Residuals become again uncorrelated
  - Variance σ^2 of noise in GPS positions may be estimated
  - High-frequency noise amplification is avoided

Results for real orbits

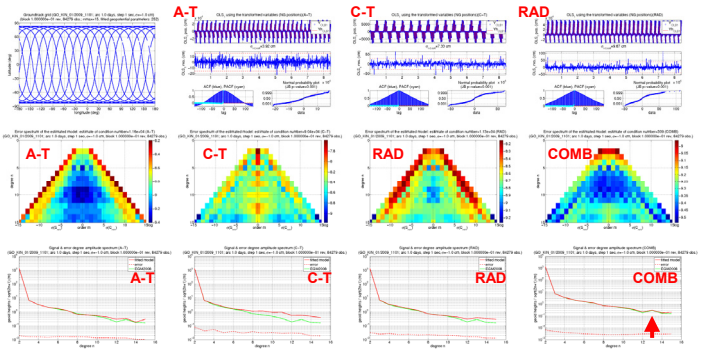
(8) GLS inversion: GRACE A (1 day; max. degree 15)

- Vector eq. **(3)** → three independent solutions (A-T, C-T, RAD)
- Combination solution (COMB) obtained using normal matrices
- Polar orbit → low sensitivity of C-T solution to zonal harmonics



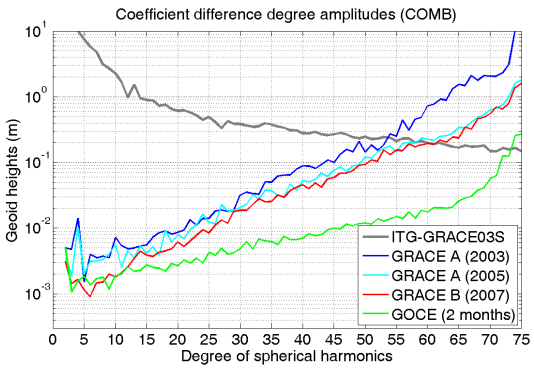
(9) GLS inversion: GOCE (1 day; max. degree 15)

- Better results at higher degrees due to lower altitude



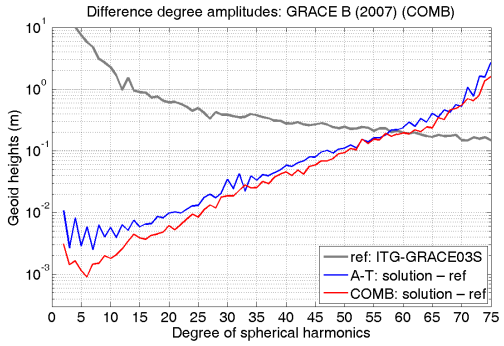
(10) Long-term solutions

- Shown are differences to a superior model ITG-GRACE03S
- Yearly GRACE solutions better at lower degrees
- Monthly GOCE solutions better at higher degrees (11–12/2009)



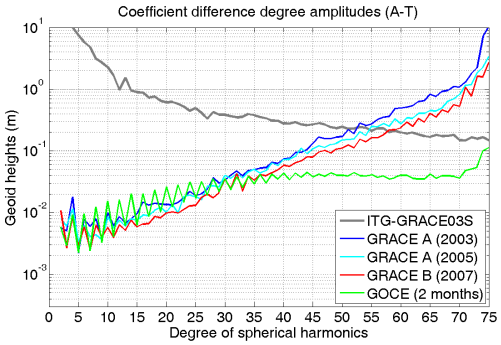
(11) Along-track vs. combined solution

- Systematically, A-T solutions have worse results for certain low degrees (e.g. 4), similarly to energy-balance-based results [2]
- Adding C-T and RAD solutions to A-T → COMB solution is OK



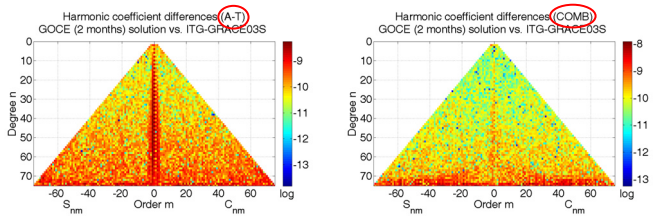
(12) Along-track vs. combined solution

- Compared with the reference model, A-T solutions give systematically worse results than COMB solutions
- Figure: Degree differences of A-T solutions to be compared with those of COMB solutions in Fig. **(10)**



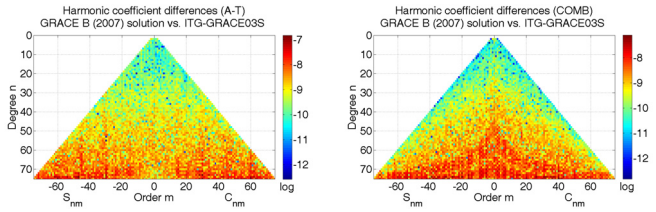
(13) Zonal coefficients – GOCE

- Polar caps not being sampled (inclination 96.6°) → worse zonal and near-zonal coefficients esp. in A-T solutions (left panel)
- This unwanted effect is almost disappearing in COMB solutions!



(14) Zonal coefficients – GRACE

- Small polar gap (inclination 89.0°), no deterioration of zonals



Conclusions

- Properties of the obtained geopotential solutions compare well with those of other research groups (e.g. [3])
- Monthly and yearly solutions show clearly that it is a good idea not to lose the three-component orbital information and that the combined solutions are more precise compared to those based only on the along-track direction, and, in particular, the combined solutions exhibit no worsening of low zonal and near zonal coefficients, even for GOCE

(15) Acknowledgments

Our thanks are due to Dražen Švehla, Adrian Jäggi and Markus Heinze for providing kinematic orbits of GRACE satellites, to ESA for orbital data of GOCE, to ICGEM/GFZ for geopotential models. This work has been supported by the ESA/PECS grant project No. 98056.

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